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SUBJECT: MGLBO1: LEBANON MONITORING GROUP SITUATION
REPORT NO. 27

SLEIMAN SWORN IN AS PRESIDENT OF LEBANON

1. (SBU) Parliament elected Michel Sleiman president, with 118 votes cast in his favor, Embassy Beirut confirms. Six MPs cast blank ballots. Media report the three remaining ballots included a symbolic vote for Rafiq Hariri and "all the martyred MPs." (Ops/Embassy Beirut e-mail, AFP)

2. (U) In his statement to parliament, Sleiman called for national unity and reconciliation. He reaffirmed Lebanon's respect for UNSC resolutions, including support for the Special Tribunal. He said the "resistance" had been a necessity, but the "achievements of the resistance should not be exploited in internal disputes." (Open Source Center, al-Jazeera)

3. (U) Sleiman highlighted the Israeli occupation of Shebaa farms and stressed the need for a national strategic stance that would benefit from the lessons of the resistance. (Open Source Center, al-Jazeera)

4. (U) Sleiman called for "brotherly relations" between Lebanon and Syria based on mutual respect for sovereignty.

(Open Source Center, al-Jazeera)

BERRI SWIPES AT U.S.; QATARI EMIR DECLARES LEBANON WINNER

¶5. (U) In his introductory statement, Speaker Nabih Berri thanked a range of Arab and non-Arab international actors. He thanked the United States for concluding Lebanon was not the place to "carry out" its objectives for the Middle East. (Open Source Center, al-Jazeera)

¶6. (U) Speaking after Sleiman, Qatari Emir Hamad bin Khalifa praised the "bravery of the resistance" when it was necessary in 2006 and the "wisdom" of the Lebanese parties in working through the political process. (Open Source Center, al-Jazeera)

INTERNATIONAL REACTION POSITIVE

¶7. (U) Jordanian King Abdullah, Moroccan King Mohammed, UNSYG Ban, UK Foreign Secretary Miliband, and German President Koehler issued statements of support. (aljazeera.net, un.org)

¶8. (U) French President Sarkozy congratulated Sleiman and noted he hoped to visit Lebanon very soon. (nowlebanon.com)

¶9. (U) Minimize considered.
RICE